THE FIVE EMPIRES

AN

OUTLINE OF ANCIENT HISTORY

BY

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REPRINTED, WITH A FEW NOTES CONCERNING ASSYRIAN HISTORY



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EDITOR'S PREFACE.

THE Rev. Robert Isaac Wilberforce, in drawing this sketch of the history of the world, designed to set forth how all the facts of human history form part of a consistent purpose and plan, formed by the Divine Counsel, for leading men on from the fall of the first creation to its Redemption in Christ Jesus, and the establishment of the Church Catholic.

In giving it again to the public, it seemed necessary to add some few notes, concerning matters upon which recent discoveries have thrown fresh light.

In these notes I desire to record my indebtedness to a small volume of British Museum lectures by W. St Chad Boscawen, Esq., in which many inscriptions from Assyrian remains are quoted. The original notes, of authorities and the like, remain as the author left them, indicated by numbers The few additional notes will be distinguished by an asterisk.

EDITOR.

The Five Empires.

ANTEDILUVIAN AGE.

The Two Races—Lamech—Enoch—Flood.

B.C. 4004.

"Thou art the source and centre of all minds,
Their only point of rest, Eternal Word."—COWPER.

THE original object of man's being is sufficiently declared by the manner of his creation: "God created man in His own image, in the image of God created He him; male and female created He them. And God blessed them, and said, Be fruitful, and multiply, and replenish the earth, and subdue it" (Gen. i. 27, 28). To set forth upon earth God's image, and to rule all creatures for their happiness, man was sent into the world.

By means of that natural perfection which he had from God's image within, and of God's outward presence, which would doubtless communicate to him gifts above nature, he might have continued in this happy state. He fell, however; he was cut off from God's outward presence; and God's image within became corrupted and debased. Yet even then he was not altogether forsaken; and the course of his history declares by what means it has pleased God to renew in some measure His lost image, and to give hopes hereafter of its perfect restoration. The end of man's

races—the sons of God, and the children of men—the respective forerunners of the world and of the Church. The children of Seth built their social life upon that divine system in which they were placed, and lived in expectation of the promise of the world's recovery. Cain and his family were driven out from God's presence, and sought by their own contrivance to supply what seemed irreparably lost. Society arose in both from that family-relation in which God had placed them; mankind were bound together not by voluntary agreement, but by natural affinity; and the nation was but a wider household. But though society itself had thus a divine principle, yet the contrivances which minister to it—the arts of life, the means of security—these had a human origin, and were produced by the self-interest and necessities of man. Seth dwelt with his father Adam; and when his first child was born, we read of no consequence but the establishment of God's public worship. "Then began men to call upon the name of the Lord."[1] Cain, on the other hand, whose object was to defend himself from being "a fugitive in the earth," built the first city, and called it after the name of his first-born son:[2] and the two races continue to run parallel to one another. In the time of Lamech, the seventh from Adam, the powers of human society came to a head—his children were leaders in their several ways to the herdsmen and artificers of the world: "Adah bare Jabal: he was the father of such as dwelt in tents, and have cattle. And his brother's name was Jubal: he was the father of all such as handle the harp and organ. And Zillah, she also bare Tubal-cain, an instructer of every artificer in brass and iron."[3]

These gifts were in fact but manifestations of that sovereign wisdom from which human skill, as well as human conscience, proceeds; the confused remains of that divine image which had formerly been perfectly manifest. This image was never so far effaced as not to shew the traces

[1] Gen. iv. 26. [2] Gen. iv. 17 [3] Gen. iv. 20 22.

of what it once had been. Thus the perfection of human skill was shewn in Bezaleel to be God's inspiration.[1] And even man's society had its sanction and strength from the wisdom of God. By it "kings reign, and princes decree justice."[2] But that the worldly seed should be allowed to work out and develop these gifts of God,—that it should bring society to its strength, should build cities, and provide the arts which defend and adorn them,—is a proof that there is a certain maturity of man's social state, which is to be brought about through human agency. This Lamech beheld in the labours of his children, and to it probably he referred when he compared the security of himself, the seventh from Adam, with that of the first founder of city-life. He had heard of God's sentence on Cain; but he derided it, when he thought of the strength and ingenuity of his family, and of the safety which society conferred. "If Cain shall be avenged sevenfold, surely Lamech seventy and sevenfold."[3]

Far different was the confidence which, in the same generation, was displayed by the descendant of Seth. The dispositions of men already indicated that the advancement of civil society would be attended by a neglect of its real end. But in this very generation did God raise up a testimony to the reality of His moral government, and to the vanity of all attempts at improvement in which He was forgotten. "Enoch, the seventh from Adam, prophesied

[1] Ex. xxxi. 3. [2] Prov. viii. 15.

[3] Gen. iv. 24. [See upon this passage the Revised Version, and Marg. Ref. It has been suggested with great ingenuity that the true translation of this difficult text (v. 23) is, "I will slay a man for wounding me, and a young man for bruising me," and that it denotes the invention of the sword, or some other weapon, in his confidence in which Lamech boasted to his wives of his new means of protecting himself from injury. If this be correct, as seems very probable, it would indicate that in the family of Cain grew up the weapons of warfare: and that Lamech's reference is to this particular development. —Ed.]

concerning these, saying, Behold, the Lord cometh with ten thousand of His saints, to execute judgment upon all, and to convince all that are ungodly among them of all their ungodly deeds which they have ungodly committed, and of all their hard speeches which ungodly sinners have spoken against Him."[1] "And Enoch walked with God: and he was not; for God took him."[2]

Thus early were the principles of human society and the hallowed rule of heavenly contemplation brought into opposition with one another. Both arise from those natural relations with which God has formed mankind, and from those powers and endowments which He has given. But they speedily took their leave of one another. Yet the happiness of man's life depends upon their moving together with an equal pace; and the complete establishment of Christ's kingdom implies their perfect combination. And the great object of history is to shew how these powers diverged from one another, and how they have again been brought to unite: their times of meeting are the grand epochs in the annals of mankind.

Before the flood these powers of the world and the Church were altogether divided. In one family God was worshipped; and Adam's life of nine hundred and thirty-one years enabled him to testify God's works to eight generations of his children. Methuselah, his descendant in the eighth generation, lived 969 * years, so that he could talk with Noah his grandson, and with the children of Noah, and tell them what the first man had declared to

[1] Jude 14, 15. [2] Gen. v. 24.

* Methuselah's 969 years of life bring his death into coincidence with the date of the deluge. Thus—

Methuselah,	187,	begat Lamech. Gen. v. 25
Lamech,	*182,*	begat Noah. Gen. v. 28.
Noah,	600,	enters Ark. Gen. vii. 11.
Total,	969	years: Lamech's death was five years earlier.

Gen. v. 30.—Ed.

him. But out of this household God was forgotten: "All flesh had corrupted his way upon the earth."[1] Even the worldly purposes of human society were destroyed. It did not yield present security. "The earth was corrupt before God, and the earth was filled with violence. And God said unto Noah, The end of all flesh is come before me; for the earth is filled with violence through them; and, behold, I will destroy them with the earth. But Noah found grace in the eyes of the Lord."[2]

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THE EARTH PEOPLED.

Nimrod—Babel.

B.C. 2348. A.M. 1656.

"The breath of Heaven has blown away
What toiling earth had pil'd,
Scattering wise heart and crafty hand,
As breezes strew on ocean's sand
The fabrics of a child."—*Christian Year.*

THE flood is the first great epoch in history; for by it God destroyed the worldly race, and the chosen family became the representatives of mankind. God saved them "in the ark from perishing by water," while He brought in "the flood upon the world of the ungodly;"[3] just as "the ark of Christ's Church"[4] has since been appointed as the only sure means of preservation. This flood, and the means of man's deliverance from it, were long remembered among the different tribes of mankind; and an ancient historian tells us, that in his days there were "some remains of the ark to be seen among the mountains of Armenia, and that

[1] Gen. vi. 12.
[2] Gen. vi. 11, 13, 8.
[3] 2 Pet. ii. 5.
[4] Baptismal Service.

the pitch procured from it was employed as a charm."[1] For when the waters subsided, it was in this country, just in the centre of Asia, that the ark rested on the mountains of Ararat. Noah and his three sons, Shem, Ham, and Japheth, with the animals which they had kept alive in the ark, issued forth to occupy the empty world.*

For some time Noah's family lived together; and before they separated, a prediction was uttered by the aged patriarch, which has been wonderfully accomplished in the general arrangement of the world. Taking occasion from the want of reverence shewn to him by Ham, and from the filial duty of Shem and Japheth, Noah declared what would be the general fortune of their future descendants. To the children of Shem he promised that they should be the especial objects of some spiritual blessing, while Japheth's descendants should bear the leading part in the appropriation of this world's possessions. To Ham he gave no promise; and one of Ham's sons, who perhaps had taken part in his father's crime, he sentenced to be a servant to the children of his brother: "Blessed be the Lord God of Shem, and Canaan shall be his servant."[2] Finally, he foretold a combination between the worldly power of the sons of Japheth and the spiritual seed of Shem; and this consummation he predicted when those who possessed earthly might should take up their rest with the heirs of the divine blessing. "God shall enlarge Japheth, and he shall dwell in the tents of Shem, and Canaan shall be his servant."[3]

The general fulfilment of this prophecy will be seen in the subsequent history. So early did God mark out what should be the general aspect of the world. But the first appearance of things promised otherwise. Nimrod, the first who rose to worldly eminence, was Ham's descendant, and with his followers the empire of the East for a while

[1] Berosus, ap. Joseph, i. 4. [2] Gen. ix. 26. [3] Gen. ix. 27.

* The first record of Altar building, is found upon this occasion. Cor. viii. 20.

continued. Ham's other descendants, independently of Canaan, extended themselves over the continent of Africa, while the children of Shem continued in the neighbourhood of Armenia, and thence spread towards Syria and Arabia. The family of Japheth was more widely diffused; and, stretching towards the northern part of Asia, extended to India on one side, and Europe on the other. From which son of Noah the early inhabitants of America came is uncertain. Our knowledge concerning the rest is chiefly drawn from the likeness which there is in the languages now spoken by different nations. Thus we are assured, that we who live in Europe are more akin to the inhabitants of India than either of us are to the Arabians, because our languages are further removed from theirs than they are from one another.

This difference of tongues was not first produced, though it has since been increased, by the distance of different nations. But about five generations after the flood, proud men—the leaders, probably, of the chief families of Noah's sons—wished to build them a great city, that they might not be divided from one another. All the world, they thought, would thus be gathered into one empire, and men would not be scattered without connexion over the earth. This great design has since been set forth, and will one day be fulfilled in Christ's Church; but the kingdom desired by men was founded in pride, and ended in ruin. By God's law, authority belonged to Noah, that just man whom God had favoured; whereas this new city was the beginning of Nimrod's kingdom.[1] Noah would have used his authority as a parent to keep his children from idolatry; and, perhaps, for this reason God continued his life for three hundred and fifty years after the flood. But nothing good could be expected from Nimrod, that "mighty hunter," whose power was from strength, not from right, and who was the grandson of Ham, the least godly of those who had

[1] Gen. x. 9; 1 Chron. i. 10.

escaped the flood. God was pleased, therefore, to defeat this plan for making the earth one kingdom.* He confounded men's languages, so that they could not understand each other's speech. They were obliged, therefore, to separate into different nations. "Therefore is the name of" the city "called Babel," *i.e.*, confusion, "because the Lord did there confound the language of all the earth."[1]

[1] Gen. xi. 9.

* It is thought that the massive remains still existing at "Birs Nimrud" are relics of this enterprise. It consists of a solid pile of brick, rising in one part to an elevation of 197 feet. The upper portions of it bear evidences, in the vitrifaction of the bricks which originally formed it, of having been subjected to intense heat. Sir R. K. Porter has shewn that this heat operated from above, and was probably produced by lightning. The traditional account of the overthrow of Babel is, that it was the result of fire from heaven. Later Babylonian erections, especially the Temple of Belus, occupied the same site.

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of the world are come."[1] In His dealings with Israel it pleased God to give a sign of His dispensations with the Church at large. Israel was led through the waters of the Red Sea; so has God appointed that through the waters of baptism men pass into His Church.[2] As by this ordinance men are admitted into "the number of God's faithful and elect children,"[3] so was the nation of Israel "elected" to be a "special people."[4] Thus was their general predestination a sign of the election of individuals in later days to Christian privileges. So, again, the manna with which they were fed in the wilderness was a type of that heavenly food with which, in His holy communion, our Lord refreshes His faithful servants.[5] The wilderness in which they walked so long, resembled the world we inhabit; and the heavenly state was signified by the Canaan of rest which lay beyond.[6]

These things were understood not at the moment, but were "pearls that lay concealed in the great deep of God's counsels."[7] And when the Israelites entered Canaan, the old figures passed away like visions of the night, and a new series of God's dealings began. But before this happened, that wonderful law had been given, the schoolmaster to bring men to Christ, which lasted till it was fulfilled in Him. This law had several parts and many objects. Its first part consisted of those ten commandments which Moses distinguishes from the rest, because spoken by the very mouth of God,[8] by which the teaching of man's conscience, and the commands which had been given to the patriarchs, were renewed. Another part consisted of those laws and ceremonies which were meant to keep the Israelites distinct from surrounding nations. Thus were they fitted for their great purpose, to prepare the way for the coming of Christ. The provision for this object was the third and most important part of their law, which by its sacrifices led their

[1] 1 Cor. x. 11. [2] 1 Cor. x. 1. [3] Baptismal Service.
[4] Deut. vii. 6. [5] John vi. 51; 1 Cor. x. 3, 16.
[6] Heb. iv. 8. [7] Davison on Sacrifice. [8] Deut. v. 22.

they "sold the children of Israel and the children of Jerusalem unto the Grecians;"[1] but in general peace existed between them,—a thing the more necessary to the Sidonians, because, as in after-years, "their country was nourished by" the land of Israel.[2] For already "Judah, and the land of Israel, traded in their market wheat of Minnith, and honey, and oil, and balm."[3] This friendly connexion was strengthened by the tie of a common language. Though the Sidonians were children of Ham, yet their country, one of the earliest peopled in the world ("Hebron was built seven years before Zoan in the land of Egypt,"[4]) was no doubt inhabited before the confusion of tongues; and either from this circumstance, or from subsequent intercourse, their language was the same with that of their Jewish neighbours.[5]

Thus undisturbed on the side of the continent, the Phœnicians had built several powerful cities upon peninsulas or small islands adjoining to the northern shore of the land of Israel. The most northerly of these, Aradus, was considerably beyond their boundary: it stood upon an island; and opposite to it was another town on the continent, called from its position Antaradus. The next towards the south was Tripolis, which still exists. Then came Byblus, or Berytus, now Beyroot. Southward of Berytus lay Sidon, the first of these Phœnician cities which stood properly upon Israelitish ground. But southward still, within the limits of the tribe of Asher, lay Tyre, the last and chiefest of all their cities, a Sidonian colony, as early as the time of Joshua;[6] originally built upon a peninsula, but afterwards

[1] Joel iii. 6; Amos i. 9.

[2] Acts xii. 20.

[3] Ezek. xxvii. 17.

[4] Num. xiii. 22.

[5] To give a single instance: in Carthage, a Tyrian colony, the ruling officers were called *suffetes;* evidently the same word with the Jewish name of the judges, *shophetim.*

[6] Josephus supposes it to have been founded during the times of the Judges; but the account given by Herodotus (ii. 44) accords with the book of Joshua (xix. 29).

transferred to an island about half a mile from the shore; and so small (only twenty-two furlongs in circumference) that its inhabitants were compelled to raise their houses to an unusual height.

These five cities, but especially the last two, had attained in the time of Solomon to an unparalleled prosperity; engrossing all the trade which at that time existed in the world. There was then no nation which possessed any power except the Assyrians and Egyptians, with both of whom the Phœnicians carried on a gainful traffic. But their greatest power was derived from the colonies which they settled on the various barbarian coasts which their ships visited. They had penetrated into the Black Sea, where they had founded the city of [illegible] of "Tubal and Meshech," the Tibareni and Moschi, who inhabited Georgia, they purchased the "persons of men;" while Togarmah, or Cappadocia, "traded in their fairs with mules and horses."[2] The inhabitants of Greece and Italy were a people destined, in their time, to play a higher part in the world's history; and there the Phœnicians were unable to make any permanent settlements, though a few of their emigrants mingled with the Greeks, and they carried off from its coast a few prisoners; but along the [illegible] of the *Mediterranean they spread [illegible].* Their most *important colonies were on the northern [illegible] of Africa, Utica, Carthage, [illegible]; [illegible] also to have settled on the western [illegible] the shore of the Atlantic and to have [illegible] far as Britain and the Baltic.*[4] *They [illegible] the islands of the Mediterranean, [illegible] and the Balearic Isles. These [illegible] a view to their trade with the [illegible] subject countries. Tarshish or [illegible]*

[1] [illegible]

[2] [illegible]
[illegible]

[illegible]

neighbouring city of Sidon. This he did at the persuasion of his wife Jezebel, the daughter of the king of Sidon; and so besotted was she by this idol-worship, that she sought to slay all the prophets or teachers of the true religion who remained in the land of Israel. But at this time God raised up Elijah the Tishbite to be a restorer of His service, and gave him such courage, power, and influence, that he became the founder of a new line of prophets in Israel, and prevented the true faith from being totally lost. He began by praying for a great drought, which God sent in answer to his prayers.[1] It was a painful thing to witness the want and misery which this drought occasioned throughout the whole country; but better it was that they should suffer this affliction than that God's favour should be for ever lost to the nation.[2] At a later period God sent down fire from heaven upon the altar which Elijah had built upon Mount Carmel; and the whole nation, which was looking on, confessed, "The Lord, He is the God; the Lord, He is the God."[3] Thus commissioned, Elijah put to death the priests of Baal, according to the law of Moses; he predicted Ahab's own destruction and that of his family, and the Lord "let none of his words fall to the ground." He, too, was a type of Christ in his afflictions, as in his spirit and power of John the Baptist;[4] and as Moses had done before him, he fasted

defeated at the battle of Karkar. Some confusion of date for a time made this rather doubtful; but the Assyrian inscriptions are throughout consistent with themselves, and demonstrate that an error of about forty years has crept into the chronological system adopted in the Bible margins. The result of the battle of Karkar was the breaking up of the Syrian league; and perhaps this accounts for the alliance which in the latter period of his reign Ahab appears to have formed with the kingdom of Judah. This same Shalmanezar has left on record the payment of tribute (as the result of a later Syrian expedition in the year 842 B.C.), by Jehu the "son of Omri"—"Yahua abil Khumri;" he does not appear to have been aware of the revolution in Samaria by which Jehu obtained the throne.

[1] James v. 17. [2] 1 Kings xviii. 17. [3] 1 Kings xviii. 39.
[4] Luke i. 17; 1 Kings xix 8.

the merchants of Dedanim carried their wares across Arabia to Tyre. But Babylon lay in the most favourable position to engross this traffic; ships could sail to her up the Euphrates from the Indian Sea; and hence, at an early period, she had become the centre of trade in that part of the East. To this day Bagdad and the adjoining cities upon the Euphrates present a singular contrast in wealth and manners to the wild mountains of Persia on the south-east of them. "Though but a shadow of what it was, Bagdad is still the caravansera of Asia."[1] And in ancient times Babylon was "a land of traffic, a city of merchants."[2] Hence Isaiah speaks of "the Chaldæans, whose cry is in the ships;" and Æschylus tells of "the mingled crowd sent forth by the wealthy Babylon, archers and managers of vessels."[3]

Herodotus, an eye-witness of the magnificence of Babylon, gives us some account of the trade with which its river supplied it. He speaks especially of that with Armenia and Mesopotamia, whence vast quantities of the necessaries of life were brought in large coracles, some of them five thousand talents in burthen, formed of ribs of wood overlaid with a covering of hides.[4] When these vessels arrived at Babylon their frameworks were broken up and sold, while the hides were carried home upon the back of an ass, which was brought down in the vessel.

In this manner the city was supported. But its wealth was derived from vessels which came to it immediately from the sea, or landed their cargoes at Gerra, its colony on the Persian Gulf.[5] This traffic had probably diminished in the time of Herodotus, since it was discouraged by the Persian conquerors of Babylon. But it was thus that the Babylonians were supplied with cotton, which they wove into those garments of which we hear as early as the days of Joshua.[6]

[1] Porter; quoted by Heeren, "Ideen," i. § 2, p. 200.
[2] Ezek. xvii. 4.
[3] Persæ, 52.
[4] Herod. i. 194.
[5] Heeren, i. § 2, p. 232.
[6] Josh. vii. 21; Herod. i. 195.

From the Persian Gulf, also, they received pearls, bamboos, and gems, which they were celebrated for their skill in cutting.[1] Cinnamon they imported from the Isle of Ceylon —"the sweet cane," which came, as Jeremiah tells us, "from a far country."[2]

But besides this seafaring activity, which had its common effect in corrupting their manners, and bringing them, as Herodotus assures us,[3] to an unusual measure of immodesty, Babylon was likewise the great depôt for trade with the further part of India, with which the ancients communicated by land. Thus from that portion of India, which was afterwards part of the Persian empire, near the sources of the Indus, they received cochineal.[4] There was considerable traffic with Lesser Thibet, along a road which, passing from Assyria through the Caspian Straits, a celebrated pass near the south of the Caspian Sea, afterwards led on to Bactria and Aria. These countries bordered on the tribes which are called by Herodotus the northern Indians, of whom he speaks as supplying vast quantities of gold-dust, which they procured from ant-hills in the great desert of Kobi.[5] His account evidently shews that great riches were procured from that quarter; and also that those from whom he derived his information were unwilling to reveal the method in which it was procured. But Ctesias tells us, that when the Indians went on the expeditions in which they procured gold, it was in large bodies; and that their journey lasted for three or four years.[6] So that we seem to discover that the trade by which Babylon was enriched was carried on through the medium of caravans with the most distant parts of the East.

At the time of its great prosperity, and either by Nebu-

[1] Heeren, i. § 2, p. 246; and Herod. i. 195. [2] Jer. vi. 20.
[3] Herod. i. 199 [4] Ctesias, in Heeren's "Ideen," i. 2. p. 214.
[5] Herod. vii. 102.
[6] Ctesias, in Heeren, "Ideen," i. 2. p. 219

till his hairs were grown like eagles' feathers, and his nails like birds' claws. And at the end of the days, I, Nebuchadnezzar, lifted up mine eyes unto heaven, and mine understanding returned unto me, and I blessed the most High, and I praised and honoured Him that liveth for ever, whose dominion is an everlasting dominion, and His kingdom is from generation to generation. And all the inhabitants of the earth are reputed as nothing: and He doeth according to His will in the army of heaven, and among the inhabitants of the earth: and none can stay His hand, or say unto Him, What doest Thou? At the same time my reason returned unto me; and for the glory of my kingdom, mine honour and brightness returned unto me; and my counsellors and my lords sought unto me; and I was established in my kingdom, and excellent majesty was added unto me. Now I, Nebuchadnezzar, praise and extol and honour the King of heaven, all whose works are truth, and His ways judgment: and those that walk in pride He is able to abase."

PERSIAN OR SECOND GREAT EMPIRE.

corrupted Babylonians were unable to make any successful head against the vigour and hardihood of these children of Japheth.

Their success must likewise be attributed to the wisdom and courage of Cyrus, prince of Persia. Of his birth and education, many stories are told. Some[1] say that his grandfather, the king of Media, to whom the Persians were then subject, would have put him to death when a boy, through fear of a dream which predicted his future greatness. A shepherd, who was ordered to destroy him, brought him up as his own child; and other boys of his own age chose him as their leader. When he was known, his spirit and appearance won his grandfather's favour, and he was raised again to the command which naturally belonged to him. All agree that his childhood gave remarkable promise, which was not disappointed by his age. Him, therefore, God raised up to found the second of those great empires which He had declared should fill the earth. Three times is the extent, nature, and order of this kingdom predicted in the book of Daniel.[2] When the last prediction was given,[3] the Medes and Persians had begun to grow to power; and the prophet declares that the Persians, who were at first the inferior nation, should in the end have the superiority: "I lifted up mine eyes, and saw, and, behold, there stood before the river a ram which had two horns: and the two horns were high; but one was higher than the other, and the higher came up last. I saw the ram pushing westward, and northward, and southward; so that no beasts might stand before him, neither was there any that could deliver out of his hand; but he did according to his will, and became great."[4]

This superiority of the Persians to their Median neighbours was not derived from their larger numbers, but from their possessing a greater measure of that courage and good

[1] Herod. i. 108, &c.
[2] Dan. ii. 39; vii. 5; viii. 3.
[3] B.C. 553.
[4] Dan. viii. 3, 4.

conduct in which both these tribes were superior to the other people of the East. Herodotus describes their mode of education even after they had left their own poor and mountainous country: "they teach their children, from the age of five years to that of twenty, these three things—to ride, to shoot with the bow, and to speak the truth."[1] Besides the great contrast which their country exhibited to the enervating plains of the wealthy Babylonians, they had also received a purer system from a remarkable teacher named Zoroaster,[2] who had lived some time before the age of Cyrus. By him they had been taught the folly of that worship of images which was common in the East;[3] and even the errors of his system tended to the increase of their national strength. His opinions were derived from the feeling (not unnatural on an imperfect view of the world), that good and evil were two independent principles, which were striving for the mastery in this state of being. These principles he supposed to be embodied in actually existing beings, attended by their ministering spirits; the good he called *Ormus*, and the bad, *Ahriman*. The empire of the good spirit he supposed to be especially set forth in his own people, whose office, therefore, was to establish a kingdom, in which the principles of excellence might be fully exhibited.[4] Hence his especial attention to agriculture, as being a development of the internal powers of the earth, of which we afterwards see traces in the Persian government.[5] Thus was "the earnest expectation of the creature waiting for the manifestation of the sons of God," and thus were the founders of earthly monarchies anticipating that result which the Church of Christ can alone supply.

It was in this discipline, then, that Cyrus was trained up to be the conqueror of the East. After establishing the

[1] Herod. i. 136. [2] Heeren, "Ideen," i. § 1. p. 440.

[3] Herod. i. 131.

[4] Zendavesta: quoted by Heeren, "Ideen," i. § 1 p. 447.

[5] Heeren, i. § 1. p. 473.

river and by its brazen gates, that it seemed impossible to enter it. The people within had provisions enough for many years.[1] But how shall men prevent what God has ordered? Cyrus had heard, that, when the bridge over the Euphrates was built at Babylon, the river had been received into a temporary lake, which had been dug some distance above the city.[2] Leaving a sufficient force, therefore, to invest the walls, he employed the rest of his army in clearing out this lake, which had now become a marsh, and in making a great cut to it from the river. When this was opened, the whole stream ran into it, and left the channel which led through the city nearly dry. Along this passage his army marched. But they still had to pass the flanking wall, which was raised within along each bank of the river, and which could only be entered, like the outer fortifications, by brazen gates. How was this difficulty to be overcome? An express prediction had long before been given; God had said, "I will loose the loins of kings, to open before him the two-leaved gates, and the gates shall not be shut."[3] The very night when Cyrus attempted to enter the city,* King Belshazzar made a great feast to a thousand of his lords, and brought forth the sacred vessels which had been taken from the temple of Jerusalem. Amidst their festivity they were off their guard; thus the girdle of their loins was loosed, and they forgot the brazen gates. The enemy entered in; Belshazzar's kingdom was taken from him, and

[1] Herod. i. 190. [2] Herod. i. 191. [3] Isaiah xlv. 1.

* The chronicle inscription recording this event is as follows:—"In the month Tammuz, Cyrus, fighting in the city of Rutu, upon the river Nizalat, to the midst of the army of Akkad he made, and fighting men on the 14th day the city of Sippara without fighting took. Nabonidus fled, and on the 16th day Gobryas, Prefect of the land of Gutium, and the soldiers of Cyrus without fighting to Babylon entered."

It was therefore the 15th day of the month Tammuz, during the night of which the entry into Babylon took place (*see* Dan. v.). This was the day of festival rejoicing for the recovery of Tammuz. It was this great heathen orgie then which Belshazzar and his lords were celebrating with the vessels and spoils from the temple of Jerusalem.

given to the Medes and Persians.[1] Thus was accomplished what God had spoken concerning Cyrus, "I will go before thee, and make the crooked places straight; I will break in pieces the gates of brass, and cut in sunder the bars of iron: and I will give thee the treasures of darkness, and hidden riches of secret places, that thou mayest know that I, the Lord, which call thee by thy name, am the God of Israel. For Jacob My servant's sake, and Israel Mine elect, I have even called thee by thy name; I have surnamed thee, though thou hast not known Me."[2]

After the taking of Babylon, the era of the complete establishment of the Persian power, Cyrus left the supreme authority nominally in the hands of Darius the Mede—according to Xenophon, his uncle, who lived, however, little more than a year longer.[3] Under both these princes Daniel was chosen to exercise the office of chief-president over the hundred and twenty princes who seem to have been appointed over the king's revenue.[4] His wisdom and incorruptness in this high office—virtues which the Persians afterwards found it scarce possible to secure in those who filled the like place—afford an example to all rulers, of the advantage of conducting public duties in the fear of God. For with all this vast burden, he found time to pray to God three times a day, and in consequence he continued "faithful, neither was there any error or fault found in him."[5] His influence may have facilitated the restoration of his nation to their own land; but the measure was so contrary to the ordinary policy of the Persians, whose object always was to break up the ties which bound together the subject-states of their empire, that its real motive can be found only in the declaration which commences the book of Ezra, that "the Lord stirred up the spirit of Cyrus, king of Persia."[6]

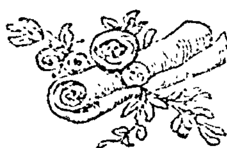
The seventy years, during which God had declared that

[1] Herod. i. 191. B.C. 538. [2] Isaiah xlv. 2-4.
[3] Dan. v. 32. [4] Dan. vi. 2. [5] Dan. vi. 4.
[6] Ezra i. 1.

ment in the Thracian Chersonese, and resumed the condition of an Athenian citizen.

From this time it became apparent, that in the small and divided states of Greece there was a power which it would require all the might of the Persian empire to overcome, and the destiny of the world seemed to be dependent upon the conflict. Xerxes, therefore, who soon after succeeded his father Darius,[1] resolved to bend the whole power of his kingdom in this direction. The country was not like the Scythian desert,—a waste, where hunger was more to be dreaded than the enemy; and his great wealth enabled him to overcome all the natural obstacles which opposed his progress. For so Daniel had long before predicted. He shall "be far richer" than all that went before him, "and by his strength, through his riches, he shall stir up all against the realm of Græcia."[2] But as this is marked out by the prophet as one step in that great chain which led subsequently to the overthrow of Persia herself, and to the establishment of the third monarchy in her room, it will be necessary to state what was that hidden power which already was beginning to plume its wings for flight on the west of the Ægean, and how the empire of the world was gradually tranferred from Asia to Europe.

[1] B.C. 485. [2] Dan. xi. 2.



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GRECIAN, OR THIRD GREAT EMPIRE.

independent action; to render each man but a member of the public body; and thus to do away the incentives to crime, by destroying all the impulses of nature. He divided Laconia into thirty-nine thousand districts (nine thousand to the Spartans, and thirty thousand to the other Lacedæmonians); and by rendering them inalienable, he hoped to exclude either poverty or wealth from the families of his citizens. For the same purpose he enjoined the exclusive employment of iron money, which by its cumbrous bulk was comparatively useless. A common table; the expenditure of their time in warlike exercises; the habit of living, not as members of a private family, but as portions of a public body,—these completed Lycurgus's plan of reducing the Spartan habits to the discipline and order of a garrison in a hostile country.

But though this system prevented many crimes, it was by the sacrifice of as many virtues. For with the worst, the Spartans lost the best part of humanity. The arts of life, the desire of knowledge, the ties of domestic love, the affections which purify and ennoble the mind, were destroyed. Yet in one respect the purpose of Lycurgus was answered. Sparta became a powerful city; its inhabitants were free from the disturbances which weakened the rest of Greece; so that, by the time of the Persian expedition, the universal consent of its other states conceded to them the pre-eminence.[1] But for them and the Athenians, the Persian power would not have been resisted. When Darius first aimed at the subjection of the Greeks, he sent heralds to demand earth and water, as a sign of submission:[2] at Athens and Sparta they were roughly treated; but the islanders, and a considerable portion of the continental Greeks, gave this token of obedience. And now the Spartans prepared to oppose the countless host with which Xerxes threatened Greece; and as a public festival prevented them from marching immediately against him, they sent

[1] Herod, vii. 159, and viii. 2. [2] Herod, vi. 49, and vii. 133.

Leonidas, one of their kings, with three hundred Spartans, and a small force of their allies, to occupy the pass of Thermopylæ.[1]

Meanwhile Xerxes led on his vast army,[2] in the preparation of which the whole East had been engaged during several years.[3] Having passed the winter at Sardis, he prepared in the spring to cross the Hellespont by a bridge of boats formed by his Phœnician and Egyptian fleets, opposite to Abydos.[4] But just as he was about to pass, his bridge was broken, and the vessels which composed it dispersed by a storm. Xerxes, in an access of passion, *beheaded those who had superintended its preparation*; and, whether from pride or childish petulance, ordered chains to be cast, and scourges inflicted, upon the Hellespont. His army crossed the bridge so soon as it was renewed, consuming in the passage seven days and nights. The plains of Doriscus in Thrace, on the banks of the Hebrus, afforded him a place for mustering its numbers. Ten thousand men were collected in one spot, round which a fence was drawn, and then the same space was re-occupied by another body, till the whole had passed. The whole number of fighting-men was about two millions and a half, and at least as numerous were the attendants. Never was host composed of materials so various: "Ethiopians from the south of Egypt in the skins of lions, and Indians in their cotton garments; their dark neighbours from Gedrosia, mixed with the wandering Scythians from Bucharia; the wild Sagartian hunters, who, without weapons either of stone or iron, entangled their enemies in leathern thongs, like the harts which they hunted; Medes and Bactrians in their rich garments; Libyans in their four-horse cars; and Arabians on their camels."[5] To this must be added, a fleet of twelve hundred and seven ships, drawn from

[1] Herod. vii. 201.

[2] B.C. 481.

[3] Herod vii. 1 and following chapters.

[4] B.C. 480.

[5] Heeren, "Ideen," i. § i. 518.

ATHENIAN ATTEMPT AT ESTABLISHING THE GRECIAN EMPIRE.

Spartans unfit for Rule—Aristides—Athens Fortified—Allies rendered Dependent—Athenian and Spartan Alliance—Peloponnesian War—Brasidas—Alcibiades—Sicilian Expedition—Ægospotamos—Athens taken.

"On the Ægean shore a city stands—
Athens, the eye of Greece, mother of arts
And eloquence, native to famous wits
Or hospitable, in her sweet recess
City or suburban, studious walks and shades."—MILTON.

THE retreat of Xerxes left the rule of Greece in the hands of the Spartans; and their general, Pausanias, headed the expedition which proceeded to free the cities of the Hellespont and of Asia Minor. After delivering Cyprus he proceeded to the siege of Byzantium.[1] But here his conduct shewed the inevitable weakness of the institutions of Lycurgus, and that it is little to remove the occasion, without removing the disposition, to offend. On the taking of Byzantium, some Persian captives of distinction gained over Pausanias by the hopes of wealth and luxury, such as he never could enjoy as a Spartan citizen; and he soon offended the other Greeks, by what in subsequent times was their common complaint, that, "strict as was the Spartan discipline at home, its citizens were no sooner sent to command in foreign countries, than they forgot not only their own severer rules, but even those common principles of duty which were regarded by the other Greeks."

In Aristides the Athenian, who had held an inferior command under Pausanias, the allies had the example of a man as superior to his countrymen as the Spartan general fell below them. To him, therefore, and to Athens they now

[1] B.C. 470. Thucydides, i. 94.

came, and committed to them the authority, which before they would yield to none but a Lacedæmonian.[1] So that Aristides gained for himself the title of the just; and "for his country, what it never before possessed, the dominion of the sea."[2] Nor had Themistocles been of less national advantage to his citizens. When they returned to Attica, on the retreat of Xerxes, the Lacedæmonians wished to prevent the fortification of their city, professedly lest fortified places out of Peloponnesus should hereafter afford harbour to the Persians, but in reality out of jealousy of their rising power. It was by the artful delays of Themistocles, who himself went as ambassador to Sparta, that the Lacedæmonians were prevented from enforcing their demand till the Athenians had raised their walls to a defensible height. The completion of their fortifications was followed by the improvement of their harbours, which were joined to the city by lofty walls; and thus Athens gained almost the security of an insular power.

The subsequent advance of its greatness, during the forty-five years which elapsed from the commencement of its command till the Peloponnesian war, was the work of those great men who successively rose up for its direction. But if the extraordinary elasticity of the Athenian constitution led to the existence of great men, the fickleness and ingratitude of the people prevented them from profiting as they might by their abilities. Miltiades, the victor of Marathon, died in prison. Aristides the just had been banished before the Persian war. The same fate befell Themistocles, the saviour of his country, soon after it. Cimon, son of Miltiades, who took the greatest lead in the formation of the Athenian empire, suffered for considerable time under a similar sentence. He had commanded in various expeditions which had established the authority of the Athenians over the various allies which made up their confederacy. They had begun by establishing a common

[1] Thucydides, i. 95, *et sq.* Herod. viii. 3.   [2] D' [illegible] 6.

men, which had been given a century before to the first Greeks who had cultivated moral and political science. These wise men, of whom Thales and Solon were the most distinguished, had directed their main attention to the state of civil society; and certain maxims, in which they expressed the result of their moral reflections, are recorded as among the first of prose compositions. But besides these practical inquiries, they taught their countrymen to think; and out of the legends of the poets, mixed with the observations of life, various theories were formed respecting the origin of external objects. Hence there arose two main schools—the Ionian, in the country where most of the "wise men" had dwelt; and the Italian, of which Pythagoras, the first who took the name of philosopher (lover of wisdom), was the great ornament. He had lived long in Egypt, and studied its learning; and it seems probable that, either directly or indirectly, he obtained a measure of knowledge from the Jewish Scriptures. He taught what is called the doctrine of metempsychosis, that the soul of man did not perish, but that it passed into other bodies. Removing to Crotona in Italy when in his prime of life, he founded a society which aimed at effecting, by a new course, what the institute of Lycurgus had failed to perform. Believing with Aristotle,[1] that the multitude could never be directed but by compulsion, he associated to himself about three hundred of the principal citizens of Crotona and the neighbouring states, and attempted to mould them into a superior society, which should be governed by higher motives His measures effected a great improvement in that part of Italy where he was settled: and his principle of abandoning the great mass of the people, and aiming at the benefit of men of superior natures, promised to produce wide effects. But public jealousy was awakened by his designs; some who were excluded from his narrow circle excited the many against

[1] Nicomachæan Ethics, x. 9.

Had Cyrus acquainted his Greek soldiers with the object of his expedition, they would have refused to follow him in a march of three months into the heart of Asia; but, by pretending friendship to his brother, who had continued him in his command, and by professing that his purpose was to attack a neighbouring satrap, he led them on till to retreat was as difficult as to advance. At Cunaxa, in the plains of Assyria, they were met by the Persian king, whose countless host fled almost without a blow before the well-disciplined attack of the Greeks. But, though victorious in their part of the field, they lost the assistance of Cyrus, who was slain while engaging hand to hand with his brother. They soon found their situation in the highest degree critical; for, on the death of Cyrus, they were speedily forsaken by their Persian allies; and on a vast plain, shut in by unfordable rivers,—the Tigris on one side, and the Euphrates on the other,—ill supplied with provisions, and without horse or light troops,—a retreat in presence of the countless cavalry of Persia seemed almost impossible. But they were Greeks; they were strong in their discipline, and in the confidence that they were the conquering nation; and when Artaxerxes demanded that they should lay down their weapons, they bade him "come and take them;" adding, "what have soldiers left, when they lay down their arms?"

The Persians felt the presence of their natural victors; but, unwilling that this small body of men should return from the heart of Asia to proclaim their weakness, they resolved to make treachery supply the place of strength. A truce was made, which allowed them a safe return; and Tissaphernes, who succeeded Cyrus in his satrapy, undertook to guide them to their own country. Under pretence of avoiding the desert in the neighbourhood of the Euphrates, they were led to the east of the river Tigris, and their officers, invited by Tissaphernes to a friendly conference, were arrested and slain. Thus de-

prived of their leaders, they might probably have been dispersed by the attack which next morning he meditated against them, had not their resolution been roused by Xenophon, a young Athenian, trained in the ennobling school of Socrates, who had hitherto served among them as a private soldier. His wisdom and courage now secured that retreat which his pen afterwards immortalised. Electing him and other leaders, the ten thousand (so they were afterwards called) retreated along the eastern banks of the Tigris, till they reached the mountains from which it proceeded. Here their well-ordered discipline prevailed over the hardy valour of the Carduchian mountaineers, whom the vast armies of Persia had been unable to conquer. The great king, who paid tribute, even when he passed from Susa to Ecbatana, to the inhabitants of the highland passes which lay between, did not attempt to follow them into this wild region. On emerging from it, they entered Armenia; and, after many hardships, approached the south-eastern border of the Euxine Sea. The army was ascending the mountain, when the rear-guard perceived an unusual delay, and Xenophon pressing forward to ascertain the cause, heard the welcome shout, "The sea, the sea!" They soon reached the Grecian colony of Trapezus; and of ten thousand men who had left Cunaxa, eight thousand six hundred were found to have returned.

This celebrated expedition of the younger Cyrus, and still more the retreat of the ten thousand, revealed the weakness of Persia; and Agesilaus, the Spartan king, who soon afterwards commanded in Asia Minor against Tissaphernes, thought the time already come for its conquest.[1] But his schemes were frustrated by those divisions among his countrymen, which were excited as well by Persian gold as by Spartan arrogance. And Lacedæmon had not long profited by its victory over Athens, before there arose against it a new enemy, by which its hope of dominion was finally ex-

[1] Xenoph. "Hellenics," iv. &c.

empire. His first care was to restore the navigation of the Euphrates, which the Persians had either hindered or neglected. But in the midst of his vast projects, and of the festivities which attended his return, the conqueror of Asia was suddenly arrested by the stroke of death.

And now was accomplished the remainder of Daniel's prophecy: "The he-goat waxed very great: and when he was strong, the great horn was broken; and for it came up four notable ones towards the four winds of heaven."[1] He died of a fever, increased, if not occasioned, by intemperance. Thus was Alexander cut off after a reign of twelve years;[2] and the great empire which he had raised so quickly, was as speedily divided.

ALEXANDER'S SUCCESSORS.

The "four notable Horns"—Jews—Septuagint—Antiochus—Epiphanes—Maccabees—Antiochus stopped by the Romans.

"Know, therefore, when my season comes to sit
On David's throne, it shall be like a tree
Spreading and overshadowing all the earth."—MILTON.

THE empire of Alexander was divided among his generals, who strove with various fortune for the vacant inheritance. At length the great battle of Ipsus led to the establishment of four separate kingdoms—that of Macedon, under Cassander; that of Lysimachus in Thrace and Asia Minor; that of Ptolemy in Egypt; and that of the East under the Seleucidæ. The two last were not only in themselves the most important, but require most notice in the history of the world, because to one or other of them the Jewish people continued to be subject.

[1] Dan. viii. 8. [2] B.C. 323.

As the time drew nearer for that spiritual kingdom which was to arise out of Judæa, the influence of the Jewish people increased. Their intercourse with other nations was augmented by the settlement of a large colony at Alexandria, the seat of traffic, whence they spread into the west. Thus were the temporal plans of Alexander made subservient to the purposes of God. For the sake of this colony the Jewish Scriptures were translated into the Greek language, and attention was drawn to them by their introduction into the great library formed by King Ptolemy at Alexandria. This translation, called the Septuagint, from the number of persons [seventy-two] who were said to be employed upon it, made the Gentiles acquainted with the predictions of that universal empire which was shortly to arise out of Judæa.[1] The time which Daniel had fixed for its approach was now at hand; and the Jewish Church was able to explain the purpose and nature of these predictions with a clearness, which to a stranger the words themselves might hardly convey. Whether their meaning had been handed down by the prophets, or in whatever way it pleased God to enlighten His Church, certain it is that the books written after the volume of the Old Testament was finished, and which were called Apocrypha,* or hidden, because not part of the Church's public teaching, shew that the future hopes of mankind, and the redemption through the Word of God,[2] were familiar to faithful Israelites.[3]

Among the apocryphal writings are found the books of Maccabees, which relate how the Jews defended themselves against a tyrannical prince of the family of the Seleucidæ, named Antiochus Epiphanes.[4] They had been kindly

[1] Tacitus, Hist. v. 13.

[2] Targum of Jerusalem on Gen. xlix. 18. "I wait not for the *deliverance of Samson or Gideon, but for the redemption through Thy* Word."

[3] Ecclesiasticus i. 5; Wisdom vii. 25; Baruch iii. 37. [4] B.C. 170.

* No student of the Apocryphal books can fail to be struck by the advance towards Christian modes of thought and expression displayed

early anticipation of its future greatness. A head,[1] we are told, was found in digging its foundations, in token that it should be the head of the world; and a wolf, which suckled its founder Romulus, prefigured the fierce and conquering character of its citizens. Its early government was kingly; and seven persons are named as having in succession worn the crown—Romulus, Numa Pompilius, Tullus Hostilius, Ancus Martius, Tarquinius Priscus, Servius Tullius, and Tarquinius Superbus.

Servius Tullius had afterwards the character of having devised institutions somewhat resembling those of Solon,[2] by which the different classes of citizens were to be united, and a measure of power placed in the hands of the people. But his measures were undone by his successor Tarquinius Superbus (the Proud), whose tyranny made the kingly name hateful to the Romans. Yet his oppressions might have been borne in silence, had not the insult offered by his son Sextus to Lucretia, the wife of Collatinus, given occasion to an outbreak of popular feeling. More susceptible of insults than of injuries, the people rose under Brutus; and after banishing the Tarquins, declared that the name of king should never again be endured at Rome. Two consuls were appointed, to whom the executive part of the kingly office was yearly committed; for times of great emergency a dictator was named, who possessed likewise for a season that legislative power which belonged in common to the senate and the people. But soon after the expulsion of the kings, it became matter of fierce dispute, of what class the assembly of the people should be composed. The Patricians, or descendants of those who had followed Romulus, refused to admit the Plebeians, or subsequent settlers, to any share in the government. The absence of political power involved the suffering of

[1] Livy, i. 56; Dionysius, iv. The early prevalence of the story of the wolf is shewn by the antiquity of its statue.

[2] Livy, i. 42, &c

personal injury, until the Plebeians, by threatening a total secession from Rome, obtained their own magistrates, the tribunes, as defenders of their rights Under their guidance they advanced from step to step, till they gradually gained admission to all the privileges of the old inhabitants.

Meanwhile Rome was winning its way to power over its neighbours; though it received a rude shock when a tribe of Gauls from the north of Italy seized and burned the city,[1] and remained for some time masters of all but the capitol. They were driven back by Camillus; or, as the more accurate Polybius tells us,[2] retreated voluntarily on hearing that their own country was invaded by the Veneti. And before their next incursion, the Romans had so completely united the various Latin tribes as to be secure from their attacks. In the first five centuries after the founding of their city, all the southern nations of Italy had submitted to their influence, while their domestic disputes were allayed by the admission of the plebeians to every office. Rome still continued to be an aristocratic state; for the senate and consuls possessed much of the legislative, and almost all the executive, power; and the principle of Solon's institution was strictly followed, by which a qualification was required for office; but no distinction of races divided the state, and the jealousy had passed away between the first settlers and those who had risen up around them.

At this period Rome came into collision with a rival republic, which long disputed with it the empire of the world. Carthage, on the southern shore of the Mediterranean, of earlier origin than Rome, of greater wealth, of more extended alliances,—was the only state which promised to check its rising greatness; and these two commonwealths seemed set over against one another in order to determine whether the race of Japheth or the family of Ham should possess the empire of the west.

[1] B.C. 390. [2] Polyb. ii. 18.

at this time was not wanting in great men; and its authority was especially maintained by Cicero, the first Roman who had risen without military talents to first-rate distinction. But Cicero had neither influence nor strength of character to wrestle with the military leaders of his day. After a temporary banishment, he submitted without opposition to what was called the triumvirate.[1] This was a combination of three persons, Pompey, Crassus, and Cæsar, who had sufficient power to rule the senate at their will, and to apportion among themselves and their followers the offices of government. Pompey had now returned from the East, where he had finally destroyed the kingdom of Mithridates, and decided respecting the destiny of its various states. It was at this time that he was called in by Hyrcanus, one of the Maccabæan princes, who was besieging his brother in Jerusalem, and by Pompey's assistance gained the government. The heroic days of the Maccabees were now passed; and Antipater, the Idumæan, father of Herod, who was at present an adherent of Hyrcanus, was shortly afterwards made ruler of Judæa by the Romans. Pompey had administered the affairs of the East with all the authority of an absolute monarch; but the designs of the triumvirate were found to turn exclusively to Cæsar's profit. Better fitted than Pompey for a popular leader, the reputed successor of the party of Marius, Cæsar gained the command of the province of Gaul, and there and in Britain he trained his army to conquests, of which his own country was the last victim. Pompey at length found it necessary[2] to throw himself upon the senate; and Crassus, their associate, having perished in an expedition against Parthia, the empire of the world was contested between these two leaders. With Pompey sided the senate and the aristocratical party; men of broken fortunes and of turbulent minds wished success to Cæsar. They met in the plains of Pharsalia;[3] and the legions of Cæsar, trained in the hardships of the Gallic war, proved

[1] B.C. 60. [2] B.C. 50. [3] B.C. 48.

too powerful for the troops which Pompey had collected from the more tranquil portions of the empire.

Cæsar had now gained the summit of his ambition, but not with any purpose of restoring the ancient system, or resigning, as Sylla had done, his unconstitutional authority. Democracy had now run its course, and ended, according to its natural progress, in absolute power. No other system could longer suffice for the government of Rome. Even when Cæsar had fallen by the daggers of Brutus and Cassius,[1] a new triumvirate was speedily formed by Antony, Octavius, and Lepidus. Hence fresh proscriptions, and a new war for the empire of the world. At length Antony, being defeated in the battle of Actium, Augustus succeeded to the supreme command,[2] though out of respect for ancient prejudices he declined the name of king, and adopted the title of emperor, which it had been usual for every Roman general to bear when he returned victorious from a field of battle.

And now the world began to present a very different appearance from anything which had been seen within the recollection of man. None of the three preceding empires had filled the earth so completely as did the Roman. The power of none seemed to be so well compacted. The Romans, who had never been a year at peace since their city was built, were now free from all enemies; and the temple of Janus, which it was their custom to open whenever they went to war, was for the first time permanently closed. Mankind began to look with wonder on what should follow this new state of things. A contemporary heathen historian[3] expresses his surprise at seeing the whole destiny of the tribes of men thus gathered into a single channel, and ready to expand itself into some unwonted form.

The general extension of the Greek language throughout the East co-operated with this universal outspread of the

[1] B.C. 44. [2] B.C. 31. [3] Polybius, i. 3

When come to the age at which the Jewish ministers were ordered to begin their service,[1] at which Joseph, the ancient preserver of Israel, was raised to the government of the land of Egypt,[2] and David to the sovereignty, our Lord commenced His public ministry. It lasted during part of three years. His words and His actions—the only perfect example ever given among men—are written in those holy gospels, which are the charter of the Christian's hope. At length,[3] He "suffered under Pontius Pilate," the governor of Judæa on behalf of the Roman emperor Tiberius, who had succeeded Augustus. For our Lord's example was but one of the objects for which He lived. He was the substance of those things of which the law had "but the shadow." Whatsoever had been foretold or fore-done had its reality in Him. He was the true paschal Lamb, whose blood was sprinkled for mankind's preservation. Even in His life, He "came not to be ministered unto, but to minister;"[4] but it was in His death that He "gave His life a ransom instead of many." His sacrifice upon the cross on Good Friday, the season of the Jewish passover, was the real sin-offering, "which taketh away the sin of the world."[5] The shedding of His blood was the only expiatory sacrifice.[6]

But, besides giving an example and making an atonement, our Lord came to establish an empire. Not only was He Prophet and Priest, but King. This He had begun to proclaim from the time that His forerunner, John the Baptist, was cast into prison. "From that time Jesus began to preach, and to say, Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand."[7] This is that kingdom of which Daniel speaks as rising in the time of the fourth, or Roman empire: "In the days of these kings shall the God of heaven set up a kingdom, which shall never be destroyed; and the kingdom shall not be left to other people, but it shall break in pieces

[1] Numb. iv. 3. [2] Gen. xli. 46. [3] A.D. 31. [4] Matt. xx. 28.
[5] John i. 29. [6] Heb. x. 4, 14. [7] Matt. v. 17.

and consume all these kingdoms, and it shall stand for ever."[1] Three things are mentioned as distinguishing it: that in its rise it should be imperceptible; in its extent, unbounded; in its duration without end. And that such should be the character of His empire, our Lord declared in fuller words: it was to be a stone cut out of a mountain without hands.[2] "And when He was demanded of the Pharisees, when the kingdom of God should come, He answered them, and said, The kingdom of God cometh not with observation; neither shall they say, Lo here! or lo there! for, behold, the kingdom of God is among[3] you."[4]

This is further explained in our Lord's parables. The gradual manner in which His empire should arise is declared in the parable of the leaven: "The kingdom of heaven is like unto leaven, which a woman took, and hid in three measures of meal, till the whole was leavened."[5] His kingdom was not to be set up by any violent exercise of power, but was to grow, as knowledge or affection might spread silently through the hearts of a people. Thus might agreement extend from one family to another household, from one nation to another people. Thus did the Ninevites repent as one man at the preaching of Jonah. And thus has Christ's kingdom ever been extended, by the imperceptible growth of faith in hearts which grace has renewed.

But something more than this is needful to form a kingdom: not merely an inward spirit is required, but an outward form. "The greatness of the kingdom under the whole heaven shall be given to the people of the saints of the Most High." Besides the growth of Christian faith in the hearts of men, the prophecy of old looked to the establishment of something which, like the four pre-

[1] Dan. ii. 44. [2] Dan. ii. 45.
[3] This is the marginal reading. That in the text looks to a further and deeper meaning of the same words.
[4] Luke xvii. 20, 21. [5] Matt. ii. 33. [6] Dan. vii. 27.

of ministering to the poor, and assisting in the congregation: the higher order was called at first by the name either of bishops or elders—the title of elder being a Jewish name, that of bishop the Gentile appellation for those who were employed as overlookers of the people. Such ministers were placed in every city; but the rule of the Church remained altogether in the apostles themselves, or in persons whom they employed as their substitutes. Of this last number appears to have been James, the first bishop of Jerusalem, appointed probably to that office not merely from his own merit, but from reverence for his near connection with the Saviour.[1] He is often classed with the apostles, but he continued to be the settled pastor of a single city, while they separated, after the council of Jerusalem, for their various labours. The greater number travelled in Asia: some so widely, that to this day the Christians of India assert that St. Thomas visited their country, and they were at all events converted by his immediate disciples.

[1] That St. James, our Lord's kinsman, was not one of the twelve, the general, though not universal, opinion of the ancients (*vide* Burton's Lect. on Eccl. Hist. iv.) has been doubted by many later writers, because he is called an apostle, Gal. i. 19 (*vide* Tillemont, Cave, Lardner); yet the ancient opinion seems most consistent with Scripture.—1. The notion that St. James, our Lord's brother, was one of the twelve, implies him to be the son of Alphæus; and since Jude certainly was our Lord's kinsman, the same must be thought of Simon, who is twice put between them (Luke vi. 15, 16; Acts i. 13). Indeed, Lardner (vol. vi. p. 189) lays great weight on the improbability that three persons having the same names should occur both in the list of the apostles and of our Lord's brethren, and not prove to be the same persons. (This argument is overthrown by the great frequency of these names among the Jews; and, indeed, another James, another Simon, and another Jude, are found among the apostles, of whom we know for certain that they were different persons from our Lord's brethren.) Assuming, then, that James the son of Alphæus, and Simon, were both or neither of them our Lord's brethren, it is obvious that the former supposition is very inconsistent with the opposition which occurs, both before and after our Lord's death, between His apostles and His brethren: "Neithe

But the labours of the great apostle of the Gentiles form he main topic of the inspired historian. On taking leave of his brethren at Jerusalem, he travelled again into Asia Minor, and thence through Macedonia into Greece. Thus was he chosen to bear witness to the faith of the cross in the chief seat of Gentile learning, and to declare in the corrupted Corinth, and the contentious Athens, that secret after which heathen philosophy had yearned in vain. Standing in the midst of Mars' hill, the seat of their chief council, the Areopagus, he preached to the Athenians that God whom they "ignorantly worshipped." Thus was the power of God's kingdom put in open opposition to the might of Satan; and some were found who received with thankfulness, from a despised Jew, what Socrates and Plato had been unable to bestow.

After testifying to our Lord's kingdom in polished Greece, St. Paul was chosen to bear the like witness at imperial Rome. He had ended his third apostolic journey by attending the feast of pentecost at Jerusalem.[1] Assaulted and accused by his brethren, he took advantage of his rights as a Roman citizen, and appealed to the emperor. The governor of Judæa sent him to the capital of the world.[2]

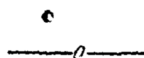
did His brethren believe in Him" (John vii. 5; Matt. xii. 46). And so after our Lord's crucifixion (Acts i. 14; 1 Cor. ix. 5). The same distinction may clearly be traced in eccl. hist., when the brethren of the Lord are spoken of as distinct from His apostles, Eus. iii. 11 (where Simon the son of Cleopas comes forward as a distinct man from Simon the apostle, as indeed Cave allows). Now if three of our Lord's four cousins, or half-brothers, had been among the number of the twelve, what ground could there have been for such an opposition?

2. The office of the twelve was always understood in the early Church to have been of a *missionary* kind; and the notion of fixing St. James at Jerusalem, seems to have been brought in by the Romanists, with a view of justifying them in settling St. Peter at Antioch and at Rome.

3. Those who are surprised to find St. James called an apostle after he had been appointed bishop of Jerusalem by the twelve, would probably be as unwilling to allow the same title to St. Barnabas, were it not given him in like manner, Acts xiv. 14.

[1] A.D 53. [2] A.D. 56.

their nature and use in his gospel, written shortly before his departure, and near seventy years after the death of our Lord. For St. John had not "tasted of death" till the consummation of the first covenant "had been fulfilled,"[1] and till the whole system of the Church had been established. Then was the last eye-witness taken away, and the testimony was bequeathed to the successors of the apostles.



APOSTOLIC MEN. THE KINGDOM OF CHRIST EXTENDED.

Difficulties of the First Successors of the Apostles—Our Lord's Presence with His Church—Unity the Sustaining Principle of His Kingdom—St. Clement—St. Ignatius—Reasons for Unity—Maintained by Community in Worship and Ordinances—Martyrdom of St. Ignatius—The Christian City—Christian Patriotism—Hegesippus—Gnostics Opposed by Testimony of Early Church—Irenæus—Great Importance of Church-System in the Infancy of Christ's Kingdom—The Church of England Appeals to its Authority—Rapid Advance of the Fifth Empire—Concord Within, and Outward Protection.

"Then up arose a person of deep reach
And rare in-sight hard matters to reveal,
That well could charm his tongue and time his speech
To all assaies; his name was called Zeal."—SPENSER.

IF an apostle could declare, "we have this treasure in earthen vessels," how much more deeply must the same truth have been felt by his successors! Humanly speaking, what could seem more desolate than their state? They were left in the wide world of the Roman empire to build up that spiritual kingdom by which it was to be suc-

[1] A.D. 100.

ceeded. Its strength and greatness, the injustice of its officers, the cruelty of its princes, the contempt of the learned, the violence of the people,—how were these to be resisted by that handful of poor, untaught, unarmed "strangers who were scattered over"[1] its vast dominions? And now that the apostles were gone, miracles either ceased, or were wrought seldom and by few. What means were there for building up this fifth kingdom, which could be compared with the wealth of Nebuchadnezzar, the virtue of Cyrus, the enterprise of Alexander, or the fortune of Rome?

The absence of other miracles exhibits with greater clearness that grand and lasting wonder, *the Saviour's presence in His Church from age to age.* By His Spirit He was with it; so that it neither lacked wisdom nor zeal; so that the apostolic men, to whom His kingdom had been entrusted, moved on resistless in the way of His will. "We have this treasure in earthen vessels, that the excellency of the power may be of God, and not of us." And the two great types, which had been given of old time, shewed them whither their efforts were conducting—the history of God's ancient people, which had been the spiritual preparation for the kingdom of Christ; and that of those four earthly empires, which had been its temporal forerunners. To each of these had the Church been likened in holy Scripture. It was the new Jerusalem, and therefore it must have the distinguishing privilege of ancient Israel, one common worship: it was the fifth kingdom, and therefore, like the four preceding, it must have one common government. And such was the fabric which the Spirit of God raised up, notwithstanding every obstacle. For so scattered as were the early Christians, composed of many nations, using different languages, with different laws, habits, and prejudices, with no central place, like Jerusalem, where they should meet for worship, nor any single earthly potentate, like the Roman [illegible]ror, to whom they should owe obedience [illegible]

[1] 1 Pet. i. 1.

This intercourse was maintained by means of commendatory letters from the several bishops, which entitled any member of their Churches who travelled abroad to be received into the communion of any other Christian society. When bishops themselves visited foreign cities, the unity of their commission was recognised by their sharing in the celebration of the holy communion. Thus, when Polycarp, bishop of Smyrna, visited Rome, in the time of Anicetus,[1] he bore the chief part in the consecration of the sacred elements, as a token that his character as a brother bishop was admitted by the Bishop of Rome. Thus was St. Paul's saying fulfilled, that "if one member suffered, all the members suffered with it; and if one member rejoiced, all the members rejoiced with it." When the same Polycarp offered himself as a confessor for the faith of Christ, the Church over which he had ruled sent *the news of his warfare in the common cause "to all the* dioceses of the Catholic Church." The circumstances of Ignatius's own martyrdom[2] were in like manner widely circulated, and have been handed down to our time. They are rendered memorable not only by his high office and character—a favourite disciple of St. John, appointed to rule over the Church where the name of Christians had first arisen—but also because in him the kingdom of Christ came into contact with one of the chiefest champions of that fourth empire, which it was destined to survive.

In the ninth year of his reign, the Emperor Trajan, elated with his victory over the Scythians, Dacians, and many other nations, and thinking that, to complete his conquest, nothing remained but to overthrow the impious system of the Christians, threatened to persecute those who would not join in that dæmon-worship which all mankind approved, and compelled the saints either to sacrifice or die. Then was this noble soldier of Christ (Ignatius) alarmed for the Church of Antioch, and he presented him-

[1] A.D. 158. [2] A.D. 107. Martyrium S. Ignatii.

self to Trajan, who was at that time in the place, and full of his plans of marching into Armenia against the Parthians. He stood face to face with the emperor, when this dialogue arose:—

Trajan. "Wretch! what evil spirit possesses you, that you are a daring transgressor of my commands, and lead on others to their ruin?"

Ignatius. "He with whom God abides is possessed by no spirit of evil, for the evil spirits have departed from the servants of God."

Trajan. "With whom does God abide?"

Ignatius. "With him who has Christ in his bosom."

Trajan. "And think you not that my soul too is inhabited by gods, since I use them as my assistants against my enemies?"

Ignatius. "You err in calling those spirits gods whom the heathen worship; for there is one God, who made heaven and earth, the sea and all that is therein; and one Jesus Christ, the only begotten Son of God, in whose kingdom may I have my portion!"

Trajan. "Do you speak of Him who was crucified in the time of Pontius Pilate?"

Ignatius. "I speak of Him who crucified my sin with its author; and who trod all devilish deceit and crime under the feet of them in whose hearts he inhabits."

Trajan. "Do you, then, bear this crucified one within you?"

Ignatius. "Yes; for it is written, I will dwell in them, and walk in them."

Trajan. "We enjoin that Ignatius, who says that he bears the crucified within him, should be carried by soldiers to the mighty city of Rome, there to be the food of wild beasts, as a spectacle to the people."

And thus they parted—the one to triumph over the utmost East, the other to die amidst the derision of the capital of the West. Thus did the might of the flesh gain a momentary victory over the might of the spirit; for

the letter of Irenæus to Florinus, who had been seduced into the Gnostic heresy. "These, Florinus, to use a mild expression, are no wholesome doctrines. They are not accordant with the teaching of the Church; they lead to the greatest impiety. . . . It was not thus that we were taught by the elders who had enjoyed converse with the apostles. I remember as a boy to have seen you with Polycarp in Lower Asia; you, with good prospects in the emperor's court, wished, however, to secure his approbation. What happened then I remember better than recent occurrences. For the instruction which we receive in childhood, growing with our growth, becomes identified with ourselves. So that I can remember the place where the blessed Polycarp sat and talked—his coming in and going out—the character of his life—his outward form—his sermons to the people—his account of his intercourse with St. John, and the others who had seen the Lord—and what he stated concerning their words, and the account they had given him respecting the Lord. And Polycarp's statement respecting our Lord's miracles and teaching, derived from eye-witnesses of the word of life, is in exact accordance with the Scriptures. All this, by God's mercy, I then listened to with interest, storing it up, not in books, but in the table of my heart."[1]

These extracts suggest cause for thankfulness to God's mercy, in that He was pleased to build His Church upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets. The written word, the rule of Christian belief, might have been all that was vouchsafed to us. The new Testament might have been given at once, without aught to guide men into its system and signification. God was pleased to deal otherwise. He was pleased to secure the right interpretation of His word in that first age, when it was most important, by establishing the system of His Church before the Scriptures were in the hands of Christians. When Clement wrote to

[1] Eusebius, v. 20.

the Corinthians, three gospels only were in being, yet the WORD was worshipped in the western Church; and our Lord's body and blood were known to be spiritually present in the holy communion, as certainly as after those truths had been more clearly revealed in St. John's gospel. When Pantænus, in the middle of this century, went as a missionary to India,[1] he found Christians there, in union with the universal Church, yet acquainted with no part of Scrip ture but St. Matthew's gospel. Of other disciples we hear, even at a later period, that they had no written Scriptures at all. But they had "the apostles' doctrine," that "gospel" which St. Paul had "received," "the form of sound words" in which Timothy continued.[2]

We thank God, therefore, not only for the gift of the Scriptures, but also for that institution of His Church which was in being before the Scriptures were written, and without which they would not have produced that unity of belief which led to the speedy growth of Christ's kingdom. For had the Scriptures been given, as a naked depository of new facts, into the hands of men, each one would have judged of them by himself; the appeal would have been rather to the head than the heart, and private study would have been more esteemed than that gift of grace which God bestows. Hence faith would have flourished less than reasoning. Every one would have had his own view of truth, until truth had seemed to be with no one. This was actually the case with those bold men, who, in the first century after the apostles' time, laid their hands upon holy writ, and undertook by their own wit to explain it. Their arguments on Scripture, whether with one another or with Christians, had no end. It was easy, indeed, to confute, but it was impossible to silence. "It is useless," says Tertullian,[3] "to appeal in such cases to Scripture; for when no victory can be gained, or none but what is doubtful, you ought not to enter into dispute. True, you will lose nothing but your

[1] Eusebius, v. 10. [2] Acts xi. 42; 1 Cor. xv. 12; 2 Tim. i. 13.
[3] De Præscrip, § 17, 19

siastic Montanus and the austere Novatian. They were schismatics, not heretics; for they were seditious members, not open enemies of Christ's kingdom, — they rebelled against the Church, without abandoning her creed: not that even they cast off the authority of bishops,[1] nor denied the necessity of sacraments; for these things during fifteen centuries after Christ were never called in question by any who professed themselves Christians.

The first of these separatists, Montanus, who arose about seventy years after St. John's death,[2] thought himself guided by the especial influence of that Spirit which our Lord had promised to His disciples. The presence of the Comforter was not, he said, a general indwelling in the Church at large, but its peculiar abode in such favoured persons as himself. In dependence on this conviction, he presumed to give laws to those who gathered round him in his native Phrygia. Many believed him to possess really the power of prophecy. His most celebrated follower was Tertullian; the most eloquent of the Latin fathers, a man of stern and self-denying temper, whose able writings in defence of the Gospel did not prevent him, any more than our own countryman Law, from being beguiled in his later years by the visions of an inferior understanding. Thus have the greatest minds been not unfrequently a prey to the delusions of mysticism. One reason is, that in the depths of our mental constitution there are dark and mysterious secrets, over which superficial observers glide with a contented and incurious facility, but which men of searching intellects can slightly discern, but cannot penetrate. Such weakness casts a stronger light upon that law of our moral nature, which makes humility the necessary condition for discovering truth.

Thus did there arise a faction within the kingdom of Christ, during the first century after the days of the apostles, which claimed to itself to be the sole guardian of the creed, and to be the inheritor of the Church's name and promises.

1 Sozomen, viii. 19. 2 A.D. 172. Eusebius, v. 16.

But though it took its name from Montanus, and he was believed to be the inspired director of its course, yet the real secret of its existence was, that its members claimed to be men who acted truly upon those rules which all Christians professed to reverence; that, in proof of it, they exercised extraordinary self-denial; and that no gross sin had stained their baptismal purity. A single gross sin was enough to exclude men from this select body. Many practices, which other Christians thought allowable, were by them renounced. They enjoined greater reserve in dress and in manners; and no one who was engaged in second marriage could be admitted to their ranks.

If this exclusive spirit had not been grounded in some deep principle, it would soon have passed away, when it was found, contrary to the expectations of Montanus, that no manifestations of that especial power to which he pretended could be proved to continue with his sect.[1] Yet it *maintained its ground, and shewed the real cause of its* vitality by its union with another body of malcontents, who discovered themselves eighty years later in Christ's kingdom. After the time of Antoninus, the Christians had enjoyed a long period of comparative tranquillity, during which there was little to put the reality of their principles to the test. At length, when their numbers had mightily increased, while ancient discipline and the strictness of early faith had suffered melancholy decay, the persecution of Decius burst upon them like a thunder-storm.[2] The Church contained many who, living in the midst of a heathen population, had in heart participated in heathen crimes. Could it be expected that those who would not live for Christ, should be ready on a sudden to die for His name? Nothing but the strictness of a self-denying life could prepare men for the crown of martyrdom. Many doubtless were found watching, and gave proofs of a faith

[1] The argument of Asterius Urbanus against the Montanists. Eus. v. 16. p. 231.

[2] A.D. 250

were bound up with that which had been one secret of Rome's ascendency—the unshaken confidence in a fate which watched over the eternity of the empire. But as their restoration could not be effected by reason, it must be accomplished by force. Now, then, came the conflict which was to decide the history of the world. For a little hour the victory seemed in suspense—while paganism and the Church were entwined in the death-struggle together. The eyes of all men were on the event; for the fall of Dagon was not as of old, in darkness and silence,—it was acted on the middle stage of earth—its scene-plot was the Roman empire. The Church of God had emerged from Babylonish bondage, and flourished under Persian protection; it had spread through the channels of Grecian civilisation, and now it was to exact homage from the majesty of Rome; it had trampled on the pride of the Stoics, and contemned the alluring arts of Epicurus; and now it defied the swords of thirty legions, and the arm which swayed from Euphrates to the ocean.

The Emperor Diocletian was long withheld by feelings of humanity from commencing that struggle, which was to end in the establishment of the kingdom of Christ. At length, his affection to the ancient system was reinforced by the arguments of his son-in-law Galerius, who was addicted, not only by policy, but by hereditary[1] affection, to the old superstition. Galerius found the old man the more ready to admit his sanguinary councils, because he had lately felt himself rebuked by the presence of some Christian officers of his army or household. While he sacrificed, some attendant Christians signed themselves with the cross, in token that they bore no part in the impiety; and the impure spirits, whose aid the heathen sought, and often really obtained, were chased away by the holy token.[2] Inflamed with anger, Diocletian had required all who bore offices in the court or army to take part in heathen sacrifices;—an

[1] Lact. de M. P. xi. [2] *Ibid.*

order which induced many Christians to abandon their hopes of preferment, and retire to private stations; while some, not allowed this escape, died as martyrs to the faith.[1] The connexion of heathen superstition with the public events of life, often made a banquet or a festival the decisive moment when such self sacrifice was suddenly required. Thus, Marcellus, who had risen to the office of centurion, was celebrating the emperor's birthday, when he was called upon to take part in an idolatrous service, from which the soldiery had hitherto been exempt[2] But this brave man, though knowing that the result must be the loss of his office, and probably of his life, hesitated not between God and mammon. "Taking off his military belt, 'I am the soldier,' he said, 'of Christ, the eternal King.' Then throwing down his arms, and the vine-bough, his emblem of office, 'From this time,' he exclaimed, 'I am no soldier of your emperors: your gods of wood and stone I refuse to adore, for they are deaf and dumb idols. *If such is the condition of soldiers,*[3] that they are compelled to offer sacrifice to the heathen gods and to their emperors, I lay down my vine and belt, I renounce my standard, I refuse to serve."

The execution of this undaunted soldier of Christ (at Tangier in Africa) was but a prelude to similar scenes, in which women, aged men, and striplings were shortly to bear part. After his victory over the Persians, Galerius spent a winter with Diocletian in the palace at Nicomedia; and the result of their secret consultations[4] was, that the aged prince at length abandoned his irresolution, and agreed to quench the flame of Christianity by the blood of its professors. In the very same year,[5] therefore, which witnessed the last Roman triumph—that insulting sign of contempt for the

[1] Euseb. viii. 4 [2] Ruinart's "Act. Mart." A.D. 298.

[3] These words evidently imply the new condition at this time exacted from soldiers, and probably first exacted on the feast of the emperor's birthday, just as the decree against Christianity was afterwards published at Easter.

[4] A.D. 303. [5] Lact. de. M. P. xvii.

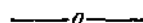
which I had seen, and to employ it as my defence against my enemies."[1]

By whatever means this intimation was conveyed, Constantine yielded it prompt obedience. He took the cross as his standard in his wars against his various opponents. One by one they fell before him. After conquering Maxentius,[2] and thus becoming master of Italy and all the west, he was opposed to Licinius, who in like manner had united all the east under his power. As Constantine appealed to the God of Christians, so did Licinius to the heathen powers. After conquering Maximin, Licinius had in some degree renewed the persecution of the Christians.[3] And now he was about to measure himself against the champion whom the God of battles had raised up for their support. "This hour," he exclaimed, "shall decide which of us has been in error.[4] It shall be umpire between our gods, and Him whom our adversary honours."[5] So, too, felt Constantine. The standard of the Christian faith was guarded by an especial band of soldiers, and committed to the care of a chosen warrior.[6] Wherever it appeared, the enemy were scattered in flight. But the emperor's attention was especially drawn to the circumstance, that the chosen standard-bearer had no sooner, from cowardice, resigned his trust than he fell a victim to the fate he sought to avoid.[7] Constantine's victory was complete: and while it made him the sole head of the Roman world, it determined the still more important point, that Christianity was to be the established belief of the empire.

Henceforth, then, with one short exception, we see its princes bringing their power and honour into the Church of Christ. Constantine declared, that while he recognised those bishops who had authority from God for the Church's inward conduct, he felt that, for its outward protection, he

1 Vita Cons. i. 29.
2 A.D. 313.
3 Vita Cons. ii. 2.
4 A.D. 323.
5 Vita Cons. ii. 5.
6 Ibid. ii. 7, 8.
7 Ibid. ii. 9.

also had a like episcopal or superintending power.[1] Some time, however, expired before the might of human society could do its work in rendering full homage to the institution of God. Not till towards the end of this century were the forms of paganism finally superseded by the Church of Christ. Meanwhile the fourth empire had not done all its work. The Church had grown up within it till her lordly boughs had overtopped the decaying bulwarks of the dungeon which threatened her destruction. But still the mouldering fabric had some service to render towards the immortal plant which had overpowered it, and then its relics must be scattered towards the winds of heaven.



THE CHURCH SYSTEM CEMENTED. THE CREEDS.

Interval of Tranquillity—Arian Controversy—Constantine—Vain Effort to Obviate Discussion—Council Summoned at Nice—Arians Silenced—Their Political Intrigues—Theodosius—Council of Constantinople—Approach of Barbarians—Impending Destruction of the Roman Empire—Its Final Homage to the Fifth Empire—Close of Ancient History.

"Still glides the stream, and shall not cease to glide.
The form remains, the function never dies;
While we the brave, the mighty, and the wise,
We men, who in our morn of youth defied
The elements, must vanish; be it so,—
Enough if something from our hands have power
To live, and act, and serve the future hour;
And if, as toward the silent tomb we go,
Through love, through hope, and faith's transcendent dower,
We feel that we are greater than we know."—WORDSWORTH.

CONSTANTINE'S greatest service to the Church has been said to be that, by assembling the first general council at Nice, he afforded it an opportunity for laying

[1] Vita Cons. iv. 24.

the name of Jesus Christ,' he said, 'philosopher, attend! There is one God, Maker of heaven and earth, and of all things visible and invisible, who hath created all things by the power of His Word, and hath upheld them by the sanctification of His Spirit. This Word, which we call the Son, in pity to man's errors and degradation, chose to be born of a woman, to converse among men, and to die for them. And He shall come again, as the Judge of each man's actions. Such, without admitting of controversy, is our creed. Trifle not, therefore, by asking for arguments of that which faith establishes, or by searching into the manner in which this can or cannot be effected. But if you believe, answer me, and allow it.' The philosopher, confounded, replied, 'I believe.' And, feeling thankful for his defeat, he became a convert to the aged confessor, and counselled the like to those who had formerly argued with him; declaring solemnly that his mind had been changed by no human power, but that some inexplicable influence had compelled him to become a Christian."[1]

This reverent attachment to their ancient system pervaded the whole council. When the Arians attempted to argue against that "form of sound words" which had been handed down among them, they "would not even hear their propositions,"[2] but rejected all reasonings against the faith as blasphemous. A confession, which the Arians offered in opposition to the ancient creeds, had no sooner been read than it was, with one consent, torn to pieces and rejected.[3] But although the fathers knew well what doctrine they were resolved to maintain, and although they wished for nothing but the perpetuation of the ancient profession of faith, yet to accomplish their purpose required no little sagacity. For they had to do with men, who, professing to agree with them in reverencing the ancient creeds, had invented such interpretations as left the very points ambiguous which they were intended to determine. Some criterion was wanted, to shew

[1] Sozomen, i. 18. [2] Socrates, i. 9. [3] Theodosius, i. 7.

whether men received not merely the words of the old forms, but their meaning. For this purpose, all scriptural terms were clearly unavailing. For the terms of Scripture each party professed to respect, while they were totally at variance about their meaning. Yet the fathers knew that holy Scripture had one meaning alone; and that its real meaning, the very mind of the Spirit, was that interpretation which from the apostles' days had been received in the Church. The Arians wished for a less positive and fixed belief—for such loose opinions as might harmonise better with any popular system; and the tendency of that age, which had lately escaped from the superstitions of polytheism, was to recognise nothing but the single principle of the Divine unity. They entreated, therefore, that the council would content itself with the use of scriptural expressions, that is, that it would adopt a test, which should leave the very point unsettled which it professed to resolve. Eusebius the historian, whose leaning was rather to the new opinions, produced the ancient creed of his Church of Cæsarea, and asked why they could not be satisfied with its time-honoured expressions.[1] He was answered, that this creed was true, but not sufficient; since it now appeared, that its words could be admitted by those who rejected its acknowledged meaning.

Something, therefore, was wanted, which might be decisive. But when our Lord's character was unfolded, that He was the very Son of the Father; that Deity truly belonged to Him; that He was really the Son of God; and when His attributes were set forth; it might obviously be discerned, by the gestures and looks which were mutually exchanged among the Arian leaders, that they were prepared to assent to any such expressions, but without acknowledging the truth which the orthodox party designed them to convey.[2] And they soon admitted that these expressions

[1] Socrates, i. 8.

[2] Athanasius ad Apos. § i. p. 895. Theod. i. 8.

B.C.
569 Pharaoh-Hophra, or Apries, slain by Amasis.
560 Pisistratus tyrant of Athens.
559 Death of Solon the Athenian legislator.
553 Medes and Persians begin to grow in power.
548 Crœsus defeated by Cyrus.
538 Cyrus takes Babylon.
536 Jews return from captivity.
522 Usurpation of Smerdis the Magian.
521 Darius Hystaspes.
519 Darius Hystaspes allows the Temple to be rebuilt.
514 Murder of Hipparchus.
510 Hippias finally expelled from Athens.
509 Kings banished from Rome.
504 The Ionian revolt. Sardis burnt.
490 Battle of Marathon.
485 Xerxes king.
481 Xerxes invades Greece.
480 Leonidas defends Thermopylæ.
479 Battle of Platæa.
458 Ahasuerus marries Esther. Ezra sent to Jerusalem.
445 Nehemiah sent to Jerusalem.
431 Peloponnesian war begins.
404 Athens taken by Lysander.
401 Expedition of the 10,000 under the younger Cyrus.
400 Death of Socrates.
390 Rome burnt by the Gauls.
371 Battle of Leuctra.
362 Battle of Mantinæa.
360 Philip king of Macedon.
334 Alexander the Great enters Asia. Granicus.
333 Battle of Issus.
331 Persian empire finally overthrown. Arbela.
323 Death of Alexander the Great.
301 Battle of Ipsus. Final partition of Alexander's empire.
264 First Punic war.
248 Second Punic war.
216 Battle of Cannæ.
197 Philip king of Macedon defeated by the Romans.
190 Antiochus defeated by the Romans.
170 Antiochus Epiphanes persecutes the Jews.
168 Second Macedonian war.
149 Third Punic war.
146 Romans subdue Greece. Corinth and Carthage destroyed.

B.C.
133 Tiberius Gracchus.
121 Caius Gracchus.
101 Marius defeats the Cimbri.
82 Sylla dictator.
60 The first triumvirate.
48 Julius Cæsar makes himself supreme at Rome. Battle of Pharsalia.
44 Julius Cæsar assassinated.
31 Augustus emperor of Rome. Battle of Actium.
3 Our Lord's birth.

A.D.
9 Our Lord goes up to the Temple.
14 Augustus dies. Tiberius becomes emperor.
31 Crucifixion. St. Paul's conversion.
32 St. Peter preaches to Cornelius.
45 St. Paul and St. Barnabas appointed apostles.
46 Council at Jerusalem.
54 Nero becomes emperor.
56 St. Paul carried captive to Rome.
68 Martyrdom of St. Paul and St. Peter.
69 Vespasian becomes emperor.
70 Destruction of Jerusalem. St. Clement writes to the Corinthians.
93 St. John at Patmos. Book of Revelation.
94 Polycarp appointed bishop of Smyrna by St. John.
96 St. John writes his Gospel.
98 Trajan becomes emperor.
100 St. John's death.
107 St. Ignatius martyred.
117 Hadrian becomes emperor.
120 Irenæus is born.
135 Jews banished from Judæa by the Romans.
150 Hegesippus commences his travels. Tertullian born.
158 St. Polycarp visits Rome in the time of Anicetus.
165 Death of Justin Martyr.
167 St. Polycarp martyred.
168 Montanus the schismatic.
177 Persecutions at Lyons and Vienne.
188 Pantænus goes to India as a missionary. Pothinus martyred.
199 Tertullian becomes a Montanist.
250 Decian persecution.
258 Cyprian martyred.
284 Diocletian emperor.
286 Maximian appointed emperor.

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